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House of Representatives

Honoring Lance Corporal Fred Lee Maciel

OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 16, 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Poe) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of a young American marine from my Southeast Texas district, Marine Lance Corporal Fred Lee Maciel who died valiantly serving our Nation in Iraq. He was assigned to the Third Marine Division. Lance Corporal Maciel in his 20 years had already exhibited a lifetime of sacrifice and selflessness. In the deadliest event for American forces in Iraq since the start of the operations in March of 2003, he and 30 other servicemen were killed in combat when the helicopter in which they were traveling crashed in Al Anbar Province in Iraq.

Lance Corporal Maciel and all his brethren aboard this helicopter, including 6 other U.S. marines from Texas, were on their way to begin security preparations for the ultimately successful and historic Iraqi elections that I personally had the honor to witness several days later. Lance Corporal Maciel died so that freedom could live in the birth of this new democracy that we call Iraq.

This Lance Corporal was a native of Spring, Texas. He graduated from Spring High School in 2003 and joined the United States Marine Corps that September. He is remembered as an athlete, a leader in the school's Naval Junior ROTC, and a role model for other students. Gloria Marshall, the principal of Spring High School, recalls Fred's participation in basketball and football as well as his rise through the ranks of the ROTC program to become a leader and an officer. She said, "Fred is greatly mourned at our school. The teachers and the students all mourn him. He was truly a fine, fine young man." Lance Corporal Maciel was scheduled to return home following the January 30 elections in Iraq and had plans to marry his fiancée, Jamie Hommel.

Last week when I spoke to Fred's mother, Mrs. Patsy Maciel, she told me that her son went to Iraq to protect Texans and Americans from terrorists. Under extremely grueling circumstances, Lance Corporal Maciel contributed to that very cause. He inspired his fellow marines with his courage, commitment, his character.

Fred's father, Fred Copenhaver, told me that his son had marveled at the thought of becoming a State trooper upon his eventual discharge

from the United States Marine Corps. Now Fred pays tribute to his son with a freestanding wall proudly featuring photographs, notes and ribbons in honor of his son.

To date in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, our United States Marine Corps alone has lost 48 Texans, 3 from the Houston area in combat-related casualties.

And while our military cannot replace individuals of unique character like Lance Corporal Fred Maciel, I believe that his service will provide a stirring example for the men and women who carry forward his unbendable fight against tyranny, terror, and treachery.

Country western singer Billy Ray Cyrus sang, following the first Gulf War, about America's valiant youth who readily insert themselves between us and international villains. He said, "All gave some and some gave all. And some stood tall for the red, white and blue, and some had to fall."

At his memorial service, Pastor Robert Hogan reminded Fred's family and friends and the hundreds of other people at the funeral that he had paid the price for freedom and thus had not died in vain. Pointing to the fruitful elections in Iraq that Sunday, Pastor Hogan said Fred was so loving and willing to give his life for his country and for causes he believed in.

Lance Corporal Maciel died in helping establish democracy in a land far, far away. You know, some causes are worth dying for. And liberty is one of those causes. Fred's brother Carlos echoed his brother's life was not wasted when he said he died for what he believed in.

We live in a culture sometimes where people do not believe in anything. And so I believe that if today we could hear from Lance Corporal Maciel himself, a member of the once and always United States Marine Corps, as a member of the few and the proud, he would resonate the remainder of the refrain from Billy Ray Cyrus's *Some Gave All*: "And if you ever think of me, think of all your liberties and recall, yes recall some gave all."

Lance Corporal Maciel we will remember, we will forever remember your fight against these international outlaws.

Mr. Speaker, as we extend our prayers and our condolences to his parents, his relatives, his fellow students at Spring High School in Texas and his fiancée, may this American hero's devotion to his country continue to kindle our dreams and ambitions of a free people.

So Semper Fi, Lance Corporal Maciel, Semper Fi.